

Testimony in Support of S.B. 415

An Act Prohibiting Certain Health Carriers from Requiring Step Therapy for Prescription Drugs Used to Treat Mental or Behavioral Health Conditions

March 17, 2022

Senator Lesser, Representative Wood, Senator Hwang, Representative Pavalock-D'Amato and esteemed members of the Insurance and Real Estate Committee, my name is Win Evarts. I live in Norwalk with my wife and 31-year-old son who has an intellectual disability and an intractable seizure condition. I'm testifying in support of S.B. 415.

When a healthcare provider recommends and prescribes a certain medication to a patient, there is a mutual trust between the provider and patient that the selection of that particular drug is based on the provider's professional assessment of the information and symptoms the provider has learned during their process together. When insurance companies implement "fail first" policies where patients are not allowed to get their recommended prescriptions until they have failed on a number of less expensive insurance-recommended medications, the insurance company has violated the patient-provider relationship. Finding the right medication is a skill and art and there should be no debate on cost. Medications are not a "one-size fits all" as our medication experience with our son has taught us.

Our son takes four seizure medications each day as well as some dietary supplements to partially control his seizures. When a substitution of a different drug occurs, which seems on a cycle despite strict prescription notes to only prescribe these four medications, we either see things we've not seen and need to consult with his doctor or, more usually, see more seizures, administer emergency meds, and consult with his doctor. Either way, this phenomenon doesn't lower the cost of our healthcare.

This practice of "fail first" should be stopped.

Thank you for your consideration,

Win Evarts

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